



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES & PHILOSOPHY
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION**

SPECIAL EXAMINATION

BDP 3202: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

DATE: 13th May, 2026

TIME: 09:00 – 11:00

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This examination consists of **FIVE** questions.
2. Answer **question ONE (COMPULSORY)** and any other **TWO** questions.
3. For question FOUR, choose either A or B, not both.

(Total Marks = 30)

QUESTION ONE

- (A)** Explain the following concepts in the context of their relevance to or use in *Philosophy of Language* and give a clear example for each. **(10 marks)**
- (i) Linguistic competence **(2 marks)**
 - (ii) Arbitrariness **(2 marks)**
 - (iii) Reference **(2 marks)**
 - (iv) Duality **(2 marks)**
 - (v) Pragmatics **(2 marks)**
- (B)** Discuss the relationship between language, the mind, and reality; and the significance of these concepts to *Philosophy of Language*. **(10 marks)**
- (C)** Name and describe any **two** theories of truth and discuss their significance in understanding how *meaning* is constructed. **10 marks)**

QUESTION TWO

- (a) What is an implicature and how does it enhance communication? Give a clear example. (3 marks)
- (b) Explain the role of social context in communication, and give an example. (3 marks)
- (c) With reference to John Searle's (1975) classification of illocutionary speech acts, describe any **three** specific illocutionary acts, and give an example in each case. (9 marks)

QUESTION THREE

In his article: "*Theories of meaning*", Jeff Speaks (2016) dissects the problem of *meaning* and unveils what he views as the underlying principles that guide what it means to *mean*.

- (a) Distinguish between what Speaks terms as the "semantic theories of meaning" and "foundational theories of meaning". Clarify each with your own example, not the one Speaks uses. (6 marks)
- (b) Explain any **two** semantic theories of meaning and any **one** foundational theory of meaning that Speaks discusses. (9 marks)

QUESTION FOUR

Choose either A or B, NOT both.

- A. Linguistic relativity is a derivation of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. **Discuss** its implications in a nation (like Kenya) that has ethno-linguistic diversity. (15 marks)
- B. With reference to any **four** elements (of culture or language), discuss the relationship between language and culture, drawing examples from the daily experiences of speakers of your chosen language. (15 marks)

QUESTION FIVE

African nations and especially Kenya, in the recent past, have experienced a prevalent use of native languages and also mushrooming of many vernacular radio and television stations. But some critics have blamed this wave for retarded development in most of the African countries while others have expressed a contrary opinion. In the view of this, to what extent does development of a nation depend on language? Use examples from specific African languages, especially from Kenya, to defend your argument. (15 marks)